

**“THE STABILITY AND DEMOCRACY FOR GEORGIA
ACT OF 2008” OR
“STAND FOR GEORGIA ACT OF 2008”**

MARKUP
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

H.R. 6911

SEPTEMBER 17, 2008

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**“THE STABILITY AND DEMOCRACY FOR
GEORGIA ACT OF 2008” OR “STAND FOR
GEORGIA ACT OF 2008”**

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2008

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:08 a.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Howard L. Berman (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman BERMAN. The meeting of the committee will come to order.

Pursuant to notice, I call up the bill, H.R. 6911, the Stabilization and Democracy for Georgia or the STAND for Georgia Act. Without objection, the bill will be considered as read and will be open for amendment at any point.

[H.R. 6911 follows:]

(Original Signature of Member)

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION**H. R. 6911**

To authorize assistance to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of the people
of Georgia, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. BERMAN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on _____

A BILL

To authorize assistance to meet the urgent humanitarian
needs of the people of Georgia, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Stability and Democ-
5 racy for Georgia Act of 2008” or the “STAND for Geor-
6 gia Act of 2008”.

7 **SEC. 2. DECLARATIONS OF POLICY.**

8 Congress makes the following declarations:

1 (1) The United States condemns the attack on
2 the sovereign territory of Georgia by the military of
3 the Russian Federation in August 2008 in con-
4 travention of international law, including the United
5 Nations Charter and the Sochi Agreement of 1992
6 that governed the conduct of Russian peacekeepers
7 in the region of South Ossetia.

8 (2) The United States strongly supports the
9 sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and
10 is committed to working with the European Union
11 and other partners to achieve this objective.

12 (3) The United States appreciates the efforts of
13 the European Union, led by French President
14 Sarkozy, to negotiate a ceasefire agreement to re-
15 solve the conflict.

16 (4) The Russian Federation should fully with-
17 draw all troops to their pre-conflict positions.

18 (5) The United States condemns the Russian
19 Federation's recognition of the independence of
20 South Ossetia and Abkhazia, an act that violates
21 legal principles of territorial integrity and under-
22 mines the ceasefire agreement.

23 (6) In addition to independent monitors to ob-
24 serve the implementation of the ceasefire agreement,
25 an international peacekeeping force should be estab-

1 lished to prevent further violence in the conflict
2 zones of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

3 **SEC. 3. PURPOSES OF ASSISTANCE.**

4 The purposes of assistance authorized under this Act
5 are—

6 (1) to provide humanitarian relief to individuals
7 displaced internally in Georgia as a result of the Au-
8 gust 2008 conflict with the Russian Federation, as
9 well as those individuals who fled conflicts in or were
10 expelled from South Ossetia and Abkhazia in the
11 early 1990s;

12 (2) to respond to the direct request from the
13 Government of Georgia for assistance in the rebuild-
14 ing of its infrastructure following the August 2008
15 invasion of Georgia by the Russian Federation;

16 (3) to assist Georgia in strengthening its eco-
17 nomic and energy infrastructure;

18 (4) to strengthen Georgia's democratic institu-
19 tions; and

20 (5) to enhance the relationship between the
21 United States and Georgia.

22 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF ASSISTANCE.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—The President is authorized to
24 provide assistance for Georgia to support the activities de-
25 scribed in subsection (b).

1 (b) ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED.—Activities that may be
2 supported by assistance under subsection (a) include the
3 following:

4 (1) URGENT HUMANITARIAN NEEDS.—To assist
5 efforts in meeting the urgent humanitarian needs of
6 the people of Georgia, including—

7 (A) provision of urgent medical care to in-
8 dividuals wounded during the August 2008 con-
9 flict with the Russian Federation;

10 (B) provision of short- and medium-term
11 housing facilities for individuals displaced by
12 the conflict;

13 (C) provision of assistance to facilitate the
14 voluntary return and resettlement of all inter-
15 nally displaced persons in conditions of security
16 and dignity; and

17 (D) reconstruction of civilian and adminis-
18 trative infrastructure, including police stations,
19 roads, schools, and hospitals damaged in the
20 conflict.

21 (2) RECONSTRUCTION.—To assist efforts in re-
22 construction of critical infrastructure destroyed dur-
23 ing the August 2008 conflict with the Russian Fed-
24 eration, including—

1 (A) provision of direct United States budg-
2 etary support to the Government of Georgia to
3 replace funds the Government of Georgia is ex-
4 pending to pay for emergency reconstruction
5 needs, including reconstruction needs relating
6 to transportation and energy infrastructure (in-
7 cluding international pipelines and power
8 grids); and

9 (B) provision of assistance to help address
10 environmental damage caused by bombing by
11 the military forces of the Russian Federation,
12 including the destruction of forest areas near
13 the Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park.

14 (3) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.—To assist the
15 Government of Georgia in leading the economic re-
16 covery of Georgia, including—

17 (A) development of critical infrastructure
18 that enhances Georgia’s energy security and en-
19 courages diversification of Georgia’s foreign en-
20 ergy sources, including development of regional
21 natural gas storage facilities and the construc-
22 tion of hydroelectric plants;

23 (B) enhancement of bilateral trade between
24 the United States and Georgia;

1 (C) retention of Georgia's status as an at-
2 tractive destination for foreign direct invest-
3 ment, through—

4 (i) establishment of national entrepre-
5 neurial programs to create jobs and stimu-
6 late small business growth; and

7 (ii) expansion of programs to enhance
8 cooperation between United States and
9 Georgian scientists and engineers.

10 (4) GOVERNANCE.—To assist efforts in
11 strengthening civil society, democratic institutions,
12 and independent media in Georgia.

13 (c) BROADCASTING.—Funds made available to carry
14 out this Act may be used to extend broadcasting efforts
15 by the Broadcasting Board of Governors to Georgia and
16 to enhance Russian- and Georgian-language Internet and
17 broadcast capacity for the Voice of America and Radio
18 Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Inc.

19 **SEC. 5. REPORT.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall transmit to
21 the appropriate congressional committees a report con-
22 cerning the programs, projects, and activities carried out
23 under this Act during the preceding fiscal year. The first
24 report shall be transmitted not later than 180 days after
25 the date of the enactment of this Act and a subsequent

1 report shall be transmitted not later than October 31 of
2 the following year.

3 (b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The report re-
4 quired under subsection (a) shall include the following:

5 (1) URGENT HUMANITARIAN NEEDS.—A de-
6 scription of the activities carried out under section
7 4(b)(1).

8 (2) RECONSTRUCTION.—A description of the
9 activities carried out under section 4(b)(2), including
10 a description of—

11 (A) the progress in reconstructing critical
12 infrastructure in Georgia;

13 (B) the use of funds by the Government of
14 Georgia provided through direct United States
15 budgetary support pursuant to this Act to pay
16 for emergency reconstruction needs, including—

17 (i) a project-by-project description of
18 how the funds were used;

19 (ii) the progress of reconstruction re-
20 lating to each project; and

21 (iii) the overall amount expended for
22 each project; and

23 (C) the progress in addressing environ-
24 mental damage caused by bombing by the mili-
25 tary forces of the Russian Federation.

1 (3) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.—A description
2 of the activities carried out under section 4(b)(3),
3 including an assessment of the progress in stabi-
4 lizing and improving the economic situation in Geor-
5 gia.

6 (4) GOVERNANCE.—A description of activities
7 carried out under section 4(b)(4), including an as-
8 sessment of the strength and development of demo-
9 cratic institutions in Georgia and recommendations
10 for other activities relating to governance in Georgia
11 that could be supported by United States assistance.

12 (5) BROADCASTING.—A description of activities
13 carried out under section 4(c).

14 (c) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “appro-
15 priate congressional committees” means—

16 (1) the Committee on Appropriations and the
17 Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Rep-
18 resentatives; and

19 (2) the Committee on Appropriations and the
20 Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate.

21 **SEC. 6. AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—Of the amounts appropriated for
23 fiscal year 2008 for the activities of the Department of
24 State, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the Over-
25 seas Private Investment Corporation, and the United

1 States Agency for International Development, or otherwise
2 transferred to those agencies, \$470,000,000 is authorized
3 to be made available to carry out this Act.

4 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
5 gress that—

6 (1) Congress strongly supports providing a total
7 of \$1,000,000,000 in assistance for Georgia to sup-
8 port the activities described in section 4, consistent
9 with President George W. Bush’s pledge of Sep-
10 tember 3, 2008;

11 (2) in order to provide this amount to fulfill the
12 President’s pledge, Congress is authorizing
13 \$470,000,000 for fiscal year 2008 to carry out this
14 Act and Congress is committed to authorizing the
15 remaining funds for fiscal year 2009 in a subsequent
16 Act of Congress; and

17 (3) any funds reprogrammed from amounts ap-
18 propriated for fiscal year 2008 to carry out the
19 FREEDOM Support Act (22 U.S.C. 5801 et seq.;
20 Public Law 102–511) or the Support for East Euro-
21 pean Democracy (SEED) Act of 1989 (22 U.S.C.
22 5401 et seq.; Public Law 101–179) should be re-
23 plenished through a subsequent Act of Congress.

Chairman BERMAN. I yield myself 5 minutes to explain this bipartisan legislation.

Last week this committee held a hearing on the August conflict between Russia and Georgia. One of the key questions we discussed was how to rebuild Georgia most quickly and effectively in the aftermath of Russia's use of disproportionate force against its sovereign neighbor. The STAND for Georgia Act helps answer that question by authorizing assistance to address the urgent humanitarian needs of the Georgian people in the wake of the crisis. By adopting this bill, Congress will express its solidarity with the Georgian people and its desire to help them rebuild their infrastructure.

I would particularly like to thank the ranking member, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen, whose assistance was essential to bringing this bill before the committee so quickly.

On September 3rd, President Bush announced a \$1 billion aid package. He pledged that \$470 million would be reprogrammed from unobligated money from Fiscal Year 2008. He also called for \$530 million to be included in Fiscal Year 2009 regular and supplemental appropriations.

The STAND for Georgia Act expresses support for the full aid package. However, it only authorizes the expenditure of the reprogrammed Fiscal Year 2008 funds. This ensures that nearly half of the assistance pledged by the United States will reach Georgia this year. These funds will enable the Georgian Government to respond to immediate humanitarian needs and shore up its financial system to retain the confidence of foreign investors.

When Congressman Miller and I were in Georgia last month, it was generally acknowledged that this would be about the amount of money, along with what other countries are providing, that could be utilized in the immediate future and would be adequate to help that recovery.

I intend to address the remaining balance of this assistance package in the next Congress when we are dealing with Fiscal Year 2009 authorization and appropriations and will now take this opportunity to manifest the intent that in the next Congress, assuming I am where I am, we will be dealing with a Fiscal Year 2009 authorization bill.

This congressional authorization, like the President's aid package, responds to direct requests from the Georgian Government for targeted aid. First, it supplies humanitarian relief to individuals who were displaced during the conflict. This includes the provision of medical care and housing facilities, reconstruction of civilian and administrative infrastructure and assistance to facilitate the return and resettlement of the many internally displaced persons.

Second, the bill authorizes the reconstruction of critical infrastructure destroyed during the conflict. It includes direct United States budgetary support to the Government of Georgia to replace funds it expects to pay for emergency reconstruction, as well as money to help address environmental damage.

Congress expects the administration to conduct careful oversight of this expenditure, to keep the committee fully informed of such efforts and to submit a report to the committee that fully accounts for the use of the funds.

Third, the bill seeks to assist the Government of Georgia in leading the country's economic recovery. In particular, the bill authorizes assistance to develop critical infrastructure that enhances Georgia's energy security and encourages diversification of its suppliers. It calls for the enhancement of trade links between our countries, and it includes measures intended to retain Georgia's attractiveness as a destination for foreign direct investment.

The STAND for Georgia Act also contains several provisions that seek to strengthen the President's proposed aid plan. By passing this authorization bill, Congress has the opportunity to express its views on additional priorities for the reconstruction of Georgia.

First, the President's package contains nothing to encourage the accountability, inclusiveness and transparency of Georgia's political institutions. As such omissions have been identified as a weakness of United States policy toward Georgia, this bill seeks to rectify this oversight by authorizing assistance to strengthen Georgia's democratic institutions, civil society and independent media.

We also seek to extend the broadcasting efforts by the Broadcasting Board of Governors, Radio Free Europe and Voice of America. The conflict between Russia and Georgia reinforced the need for accurate and unbiased reporting in the post-Soviet space.

I will yield myself an additional minute without objection.

The bill expresses the sense of Congress that any money taken by the administration from the Freedom Support Act and Support for Eastern European Democracy accounts to fund Georgian reconstruction should be replenished in next year's appropriation.

While drawing from these accounts may be one of the most expeditious ways to get money to Georgia, this money provides valuable support to many struggling democracies in Eurasia. United States aid to Georgia should not come at the expense of its neighbors or other priorities in the region.

Finally, I note that the ripple effects of this crisis were clearly felt beyond Georgia's borders. The United States is grateful to the Armenian Government for providing safe transit for American and international officials, relatives of diplomats and NGO representatives and Georgian nationals.

Although this bill does not include funding for other countries in the Caucasus region, it is my intention when we consider the authorization of assistance next year to examine the wider impact of this conflict and provide appropriate funding for Armenia and other affected countries.

There is strong bipartisan backing for a robust response to the economic and humanitarian crisis and for the delivery of urgently needed aid to an ally. The passage of this bill will demonstrate to the Georgian people that support. I urge my colleagues to support this important measure, allowing the House to add its voice to those calling for a peaceful resolution to the conflict and a prosperous future for Georgia.

I now yield to the ranking member to explain her views on this legislation.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. As always, I want to thank you personally, and I want to thank your staff for working closely with us in the Minority to produce this bipartisan bill.

The Russian invasion of Georgia has inflicted severe damage on Georgia and on the Georgian people, who in recent years have transformed their country into a promising democracy in a region where it is very difficult for democracy to take root.

Georgians have been driven from their homes with their lives coming to a screeching halt in areas targeted by Russians. They need immediate humanitarian assistance and reconstruction help to repair the roads, the bridges and the rail lines which were purposely damaged by the Russian forces.

We are reallocating—reallocating, reallocating—a portion of our existing foreign aid resources in Fiscal Year 2008 in order to expeditiously provide about half of the total assistance requested.

At a time when we are seeing a number of unexpected developments here at home—the damages done by Hurricane Ike, the placing of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac in conservatorship, the continuing contraction of our credit markets—I think it is appropriate to find ways to allocate funds from existing appropriations to assist Georgia rather than simply appropriating new additional funds.

So I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for working with us to ensure that this bill does just that. Georgia's future and indeed the future of the entire region of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe depends to a great degree on how the United States and the leading states of the European Union react in the coming months to the Russian invasion of Georgia.

The Russian Government has aggressively and provocatively involved itself in the affairs of Georgia throughout the entire period since that small country gained its independence in 1991. It has provided military support of all types to the separatist region of Georgia. It has orchestrated the grant of Russian citizenship to the residents of these separatist regions, providing an excuse for them to later say we have to intervene militarily on their behalf.

The so-called Russian peacekeepers in the separatist region have never been impartial. They have served simply as another means by which Moscow has intervened in Georgia's internal affairs. The regime in Moscow would like nothing better than to see the disintegration of the current Georgian Government and the destruction of Georgia's promising democratic past.

Georgia is vulnerable and needs our support at this critical time. Our vote today in support of this bill will send a clear message to our friends and allies that we will stand with freedom loving—freedom loving—peaceful nations rather than with those who threaten their neighbors and oppress their people.

This bill will provide aid expeditiously to the Georgian people by reallocating some of our existing—existing—foreign aid funds and provide an incentive for our European allies to commit to funding the rest of Georgia's assistance needs.

So thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a pleasure to work with you, and I thank you for the time.

Chairman BERMAN. I thank the gentlelady for her comments and her support.

Are there any amendments? The gentleman from New Jersey?

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. I have an amendment, and I ask that it be offered en bloc.

Chairman BERMAN. The clerk will report.

Ms. RUSH. Amendment offered by Mr. Smith of Jersey. Page 3, after line 2 insert the following——

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. I ask unanimous consent that it be considered as read en bloc.

Chairman BERMAN. Without objection. So ordered.

[The amendments of Mr. Smith of New Jersey follow:]

AMENDMENT TO H.R. 6911
OFFERED BY MR. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY

Page 3, after line 2, insert the following:

- 1 (7) The United States commends the efforts of
- 2 aid organizations, including the International Com-
- 3 mittee of the Red Cross and the Georgia Red Cross
- 4 Society, to provide humanitarian aid and evacuation
- 5 assistance to persons displaced, distressed, or endan-
- 6 gered in Georgia as a result of the August 2008 con-
- 7 flict with the Russian Federation.
- 8 (8) The United States urges action to counter-
- 9 act the increased risk of human trafficking in con-
- 10 flict zones in Georgia.

Page 3, line 8, after “Russian Federation,” insert
“to individuals endangered by presence within or in prox-
imity to conflict zones in Georgia,”.



AMENDMENT TO H.R. 6911
OFFERED BY MR. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY

Page 8, after line 13, insert the following:

1 (6) ASSISTANCE TO U.S. CITIZENS IN OR NEAR
 2 CONFLICT ZONES.—

3 (A) IN GENERAL.—A description of the
 4 practices of the Department of State's Bureau
 5 of Consular Affairs to provide assistance to
 6 United States citizens located within or in prox-
 7 imity to conflict zones in Georgia since the Au-
 8 gust 2008 attack by the Russian Federation on
 9 Georgia.

10 (B) PROTOCOL.—A review of how the De-
 11 partment of State can develop a protocol by
 12 which it would in the future be able to provide
 13 greater timely assistance to United States citi-
 14 zens located within or in proximity to conflict
 15 zones in Georgia or other foreign conflict zones,
 16 including by making use of alternative means of
 17 evacuating such United States citizens and by
 18 facilitating greater communication with rel-
 19 atives of such United States citizens, and en-

- 1 sure that appropriate consular personnel are
- 2 knowledgeable about such protocol.



Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman is recognized on his amendment.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me first of all begin by thanking you and the ranking member for drafting this very important and very timely bill and for moving so quickly to support our friends in Georgia.

Georgia, as we all know, is an emerging democracy, has sought to protect liberty, democratically reform its political system, and it has fought corruption. It also has risked a close friendship with the United States and supported us militarily in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In late August, Mr. Chairman, I was in Georgia, along with Mark Milosch and Amanda Sloat, for 4 days. We visited an IDP camp, met with many Georgians, including President Saakashvili, the Patriarch, as well as representatives from the Red Cross, OSCE, Human Rights Watch and many others.

Russia's occupation of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, its closing of ports and highways, destruction of infrastructure and threats are all calculated to wreck the Georgian economy and to break the people's will to resist this subjugation. I do not think it will succeed.

This amendment, or these two amendments, are focused on the humanitarian side. The first commends the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for its tremendous work it has done for the internally displaced and also what it has done on behalf of several Americans who were in great distress, which I will talk about in a moment.

It also speaks to the issue of human trafficking to make sure that this war is not used as a cover for traffickers to move especially young women into modern day slavery.

The second part of the amendment or the second amendment speaks with the issue of Americans who are behind Russian lines in this case or Americans who are ever in war zone situations.

I found it to be very disturbing after monitoring from my Hamilton, New Jersey, office the plight of two young girls from my own district, Ashley and Sophia Evans, a 7-year-old and a 3-year-old, who couldn't move, who were in a situation of significant risk, in contact with the Embassy, and John Taft, our Ambassador, who, I might add, is a wonderful Foreign Service Officer, does a great job, but I found that there were some gaps.

I went over there, again joined by your staff and mine, and immediately made a beeline for the International Committee of the Red Cross because some of the publicity that had come out of my own case—the family had gone very public—brought other congressmen calling my office, other family members calling my office saying will you look into our kids' situation? They, too, are behind the Russian lines.

I found to my dismay and shock that I brought the list to the Red Cross about who it was that were in harm's way. No contact had been made, and I was told matter-of-factly by Patricia Danzi that the situation was such that if you engage in a process, get your local Red Cross to make a request to ensure that the parents or the guardians are indeed who they say they are, that if you follow this process they will send a van in and move our children out of harm's way to Tbilisi and hopefully then to the United States.

At least five individuals so far, names that I had brought to the International Committee of the Red Cross, have found either safety in Tbilisi or the United States. One, Congressman Bishop's constituent, a little 5-year-old, has already been reunited and is now in New York as a direct result of the work of the ICRC.

So here is the point. When I talked to our Consul General she didn't know that the Red Cross did that, and she didn't know that this was an option, so the amendment speaks to a protocol that needs to be devised so that in any situation like this where Americans or people of interest to the United States are in harm's way that there is something on the shelf, a protocol as to what we ought to do.

I even met with the OSCE, their military as well as their Diplomatic Mission. They, too, said they had a van capability that could go in, fetch these kids and bring them to safety when the irregulars and the Russian Army were walking around, many of whom were drunk at checkpoints, threatening little children without mercy.

Just for the record, and I again thank Ambassador John Taft for this, we did find a safe car for the two children from my district. The Ambassador from France, Eric Fournier, bravely and with a great deal of spunk took his car right to a town south of Chiatura where these kids were behind the Russian line. He then made what should have been a 2½-hour trip—it turned out to be a 6-hour trip—and brought those kids to safety.

The dad, Joseph Evans, was at the Embassy with me, as well as the two staffers—it was one of those reunitions that you will never forget it. Joseph was as happy as anyone else. I remember Joseph Evans saying, "Viva La France!" It was a great day for French-United States relations.

But what bothered me the most, and I say this with respect to our Consular General and any of our people in the Diplomatic Corps because they do a magnificent job, we had not pushed that button. We had not used the capability that the Red Cross presented, so this legislation hopefully will lead to a systematic reform, and I do think it is needed within the Department of State.

I know Amanda and Mark were there. They saw it. We brought the list to the International Red Cross. It should not have been that way, so I hope this amendment will be added.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. I recognize myself on the amendment.

I support this amendment. The fact is, during the short time that I was in Tbilisi, Representative Smith, as was his staff, was out there. We are meeting with government officials and the police. He is out getting close to conflict areas trying to help both his constituents and others who have been stranded by this conflict.

I think it was quite a remarkable effort on his part and a very difficult, intense situation. It had a good ending, but his amendment does make a lot of sense. I support it.

I share his feelings about our Ambassador there and his staff, but I think to the extent that we can improve this process, better coordination with the Red Cross, the other provisions regarding accountability that we are talking about through his en bloc amendment and the action to deal with human trafficking in the chaotic

aftermath of such a conflict makes a lot of sense, and I urge the adoption of his amendment.

Is there further discussion on this amendment?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask a question of both you and Mr. Smith about the amendment, as well as the nature of the bill itself.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman is recognized.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Is this my 5 minutes?

Chairman BERMAN. Well, I would like to deal with the amendment now, and then we will get to other debate.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Okay. This is literally a question.

Chairman BERMAN. You don't have to use the 5 minutes now.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Is what is being provided in the amendment and provided in the bill, the support that we are talking about, is that support being given also to the people of Ossetia, as well as the people of Georgia?

Is the breakaway province going to be helped to rebuild from the destruction of the Georgian invasion as well as the Georgians being helped in the destruction caused by the Russian reaction, over response of whatever you want to call it?

Chairman BERMAN. If the gentleman will yield to me first?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Sure. Yes.

Chairman BERMAN. And then you can yield to the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Yes.

Chairman BERMAN. Part of this assistance is for resettlement. There are a number of Georgians residing in what is South Ossetia, to a lesser extent in Abkhazia I think, who were displaced as a direct result of this conflict, and this resettlement assistance will be utilized to help them get back; both to take care of them if they can't get back and to help them get back to their countries.

My guess is that our aid operations are not right now located in Southern Ossetia and—

Mr. ROHRABACHER. So Georgia invaded Ossetia, and then we are going to provide Georgia rebuilding because Russia retaliated against Ossetia for that invasion?

Chairman BERMAN. I will take that as a comment and not a question.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. All right.

Chairman BERMAN. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Okay. Thank you very much. So the funds we are talking about are not going to Ossetia.

Chairman BERMAN. Well, some of this assistance can end up taking people who live in Ossetia and helping them go back to their homes, so I do not think that—

Mr. ROHRABACHER. So the Ossetians who were invaded by the Georgians, the ethnic Georgians within Ossetia will be helped, but not the Ossetian people themselves?

Chairman BERMAN. My guess is our Russian friends will be dealing with that issue.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Just very briefly, the Red Cross never takes sides. They are helping the South Ossetians, they are helping the Georgians, and they were more than willing and have helped us.

The idea of the second amendment, and I cannot say this strongly enough, is a lessons-learned amendment. The idea that Americans who are in conflict zones are not left to some beleaguered parent or guardian here in the United States or elsewhere wondering what has happened to their child.

We need to have a very set standard of what is triggered.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Okay.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Including going to non-governmental organizations like the Red Cross.

Again, as I said before, that was not being done with the Red Cross or with the OSCE, and they told me they have the capability to do it and wanted to do it, and now they have done it.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much. I will be supportive of that amendment.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Okay.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman BERMAN. On this amendment? On this amendment?

Mr. DELAHUNT. On this amendment.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I thank the chair for the recognition. I just wanted to commend the gentleman from New Jersey for his personal courage and his assiduous or his incessant work on behalf of Americans stranded.

But I also want to note that to describe the Georgian Government as a beacon of democracy is contradicted by our own Department of State Human Rights Report. I have no doubt that the Georgian people embrace democracy and liberty and freedom. I am not questioning that, but I think there is a consensus that is emerging that the Saakashvili government has a poor record at best and an abysmal record at worst in terms of human rights and liberties.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Would my friend yield on that point?

Mr. DELAHUNT. I yield.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. I think the point is well taken, and I and others, especially as a member of the OSCE Helsinki Commission, have spoken out repeatedly, especially last year when he was on the wrong road.

What my comment said is that it is an emerging democracy. They are committed, and there are many real democrats all committed to democracy there, but of course they have made mistakes.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Reclaiming my time, I think it is very important to the American people to make that distinction between the Georgian people and this particular government.

I don't think there is any doubt that this particular government is well-connected here in Washington, but I don't think there is any doubt the Department of State reports that freedom of press, and freedom of speech has worsened. Political participation by opposition groups has been suppressed.

This is an emerging democracy, and more and more voices of the opposition must be listened to here. I found particularly interesting a report by the former Defense Minister, who is in exile in Paris as a result of being tried in absentia, who worked with the President, criticizing the United States because we seem to be unaware of the authoritarian tendencies of this government.

In his view, we could very well be partially responsible for the military intervention by the Georgians into South Ossetia.

With that, I yield back. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Just to complete the record on this gentleman's statement, the former Defense Minister that you just referred to who is known as or described as one of the leading exiles, Georgia's leading political exiles, who, yes, has been accused of corruption and so that has to be taken into consideration when looking at what he has to say.

However, let me just note that anybody who would oppose the regime and leave would probably be charged with corruption in order to shut them up or at least cast doubt on anything they would have to say.

This is the former Defense Minister, who was a very close ally of the current President of Georgia, and he just stated that, as Defense Minister, months and months ago he developed a plan to conduct military operations by the Georgian military against Ossetia.

Now, this runs totally contrary to what we had heard in testimony last week when it was testified over and over again that oh, these poor Georgians. They were just so stupid because Russia provoked them. They tricked them into following an impulse and invading Ossetia to get it over with once and for all.

This person you are quoting, the former Defense Minister of Georgia, totally negates that. His statement is in stark contrast with that. Thank you.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

We have three votes coming up. I would like to go to a vote on the Smith en bloc amendment.

The question occurs on the amendment. All in favor will vote aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman BERMAN. All opposed will vote no.

[Chorus of noes.]

Chairman BERMAN. The ayes have it. The amendment is adopted.

I have this feeling we will not be able to get through the debate and the vote in the next 1½ minutes and so it is the chair's intent to recess this markup.

We will have our vote and our motion to recommit and the final two votes and come back immediately and recommence the markup.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir.

[Recess.]

Chairman BERMAN. The committee is back in session.

Does anyone seek recognition? The gentleman from Texas, Mr. Paul?

Mr. PAUL. Thank you.

Chairman BERMAN. Recognized for 5 minutes on a motion to strike the last word?

Mr. PAUL. I move to strike the last word. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am in strong opposition to this bill because I think there are a lot of shortcomings here. I would like to refer first back to the ranking member's comment because her comment about paying for

this is very important. She recognizes that it is important not to just add this on, considering all the financial problems that this country faces.

But I think that will not satisfy me, although that is an important point, because this bill does not deal with that. I mean, eventually we are going to appropriate \$1 billion. This is the commitment. This is the vote. The vote is for \$1 billion to send it to Georgia.

Now, some would like to satisfy themselves by saying this is for humanitarian aid. The words are there, but it really has no meaning to say that this is going to go and help people in a humanitarian fashion. If it did, it would be irrelevant because all funds are fungible.

If you send money in to do things for a humanitarian purpose that allows the other money to be used for military purposes, so that is in a way irrelevant, but even the bill itself gives the loophole for the Georgians to spend the money as they see fit because it says as a provision of direct United States budgetary support to the Government of Georgia to replace the funds the Government of Georgia is expending in a way for emergency reconstruction.

So it is for general support of the budget, but even that does not tell the whole story because the big question is why are we there? In the earlier debate on the amendment from the gentleman from New Jersey it was very important. The point was brought out that there are a couple factions in Georgia, and it seems to me that our job here in that discussion was to pick out who the good guys are. Who is wearing the white hats?

Quite frankly, I don't think we have the answer to that. It just seems like what is behind our foreign policy so often is picking somebody in charge of a country irrelevant, not related whatsoever to whether they are democrats and have a democratic process or not because the evidence is fairly strong that things aren't exactly as they ought to be in Georgia.

The election. There are a lot of challenges about the election last fall, a lot of demonstrations against it, a lot of violations of civil liberties since then, so I don't think it is possible to pick the good guys.

But if you look at it in the context of our foreign policy, it is not a big deal. I mean, we have supported dictators like Musharraf. He overthrew an elected dictator. We overthrew an elected leader in Iran not too many decades ago. We supported Saddam Hussein. So as long as they are our guy it seems like we can support them, and I think that is what is going on here.

But why are we there? The people in America, they don't even know where Georgia is. They know where Galveston, Texas, is and they know where there is some suffering, but they don't know where Georgia is, and yet we are talking about a lot of money so the point is very important about how we are going to pay for this.

But even in the bill, on page 5 it says this money can be used related to transportation and energy infrastructure, including international pipelines. That is the key. That is why we have had troops in Georgia. That is why we trained the Georgians.

Then the great debate comes on. Who did what when? Who struck first? Did the Georgians do it or the Russians do it, without

taking in context the long-term history of that region and the condition of Abkhazia and Ossetia? I mean, there are a lot of arguments on both sides.

The question is who are we to make these decisions? We have assumed that we know everything, but I think the motivation is probably a lot more in detail and protecting economic and commercial interests over there and the oil company of BP, who has a lot of interest, plus international companies.

An oil pipeline. You could legitimately argue it is pretty darned important to get oil out of there, but the other argument is why do we have to attempt to solve this problem with such risk, such chance of violence? I am absolutely convinced, even with the well intentions or the good intentions of those who are promoting this bill. I believe the consequence of this bill will be an unintended consequence, and that will be the reigniting of the Cold War.

I mean, this is very, very dangerous. It is shocking to me of the lack of interest. A few members come to this committee. There is no media interest. Very few people here. This is the kind of bill that so often the more important it is the less attention it gets and the more likely it is to come up under suspension and slip it through.

Another billion dollars committed to a country on the borders of Russia looking for a fight, looking to reignite the Cold War. What we need to think about is how would we respond if we had to face the same problem on our borders in Mexico? What if the Russians were on the border of Mexico? We wouldn't tolerate this for a minute.

But we expect that we can go over just egging on a fight. I see this as very, very dangerous. Well intended, but it will not achieve it. I think that we really ought to reassess this, and I urge a strong no vote on this bill.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Who else seeks recognition? The gentleman from California? For what purpose do you seek—

Mr. SHERMAN. I rise to strike the last word.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHERMAN. Perhaps the worst thing you could say about the Georgian people is that Georgia is a democracy. If that is true, the people of Georgia voted for this guy on a platform that was ultranationalistic, but was worse. He seemed to have believed his own speeches.

And whether you believe his ex-Defense Minister that he has been plotting this for 2 years or you just believe our State Department that for 2 weeks we were screaming at him not to take the Russian bait, in any case the first major military action was Georgia launched against South Ossetia.

In light of that, I wonder why we are bringing this resolution up. I am particularly concerned that the resolution seems one sided in assigning all of the fault for the unfortunate conflict to Russia and none of it to Georgia. We have many international problems, humanitarian problems, around the world to which the American response has been pathetically small. Here is one case where perhaps the administration wants to do too much.

We see that there are pipelines in Georgia. Why are those pipelines in Georgia? Because we funded an anti Armenia pipeline that violates the rules of geometry, that does not use a straight line, but rather goes around Armenia in order to benefit those who are trying to isolate Armenia, and now there is talk in this resolution of a new pipeline, again one designed to avoid going through Armenia territory, avoid building a peace pipeline between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Armenia is the innocent victim of this war. It has suffered well over \$600 million of damage to its economy. Without objection, I would like to put into the record a more detailed statement of how Armenia has suffered.

Chairman BERMAN. Without objection. It will be included in the record.

[The information referred to follows:]

Armenia and the implications of the Russo-Georgia Conflict

- The Armenian government estimates the Conflict has caused approximately \$680 million of damage to its economy.
- Landlocked Armenia uses Georgia's rail, roads and Black Sea ports for carrying out at least 70 percent of its external trade.
- Armenia experienced serious fuel shortages following the August 16 explosion on a rail bridge in central Georgia that disrupted rail traffic through the war-stricken nation. Large-scale supplies of fuel and other basic commodities to Armenia resumed through another Georgian rail bridge, prepared for temporary use, eleven days later.
- Armenia worked in an emergency mode during those several days to ensure continued cargo shipments, by staying in close touch with the security councils of both Georgia and Russia.
- Armenia, unlike other countries in the region, opened her borders to over 200 American diplomats and their families in addition to thousands of refugees of Georgian and Armenian descent who fled the escalating violence in the Republic of Georgia
- The Armenian embassy in Tbilisi said nearly 3,300 Georgian citizens have found refuge in Armenia since the start of Russian military operations in their country. Most are presumed ethnic Armenians.

Armenia Claims Huge Losses From Georgian Crisis

By Hovannes Shoghikian

The military conflict between Russia and Georgia has inflicted nearly \$680 million worth of damage on Armenia's economy heavily reliant on Georgian territory, a senior Armenian official said on Wednesday.

Artur Baghdasarian, secretary of Armenia's National Security Council, said the figure, equivalent to one quarter of the country's 2008 state budget, is based on "calculations" done by government experts.

"As a result of this Georgian-South Ossetian conflict, damage has been inflicted on the Republic of Armenia," Baghdasarian told RFE/RL. "We worked in an emergency regime during those several days to ensure continued cargo shipments, being in close touch with the security councils of both Russia and Georgia."

Baghdasarian's remarks appeared to be in conflict with Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian's earlier assurances that the economic cost of the Russian-Georgian conflict for Armenia has been minimal. Sarkisian strongly criticized last week Armenian opposition leaders and media that claimed the opposite.

"Has our society felt any upheavals, have the day-to-day lives of our citizens been disrupted in the past three weeks? Of course not," he said.

Landlocked Armenia uses Georgia's east-west railway, roads and Black Sea ports for carrying out at least 70 percent of its external trade. Cargo traffic through those transport routes was seriously complicated by Georgia's ill-fated August 8 attempt to retake South Ossetia, which sparked a massive Russian counteroffensive.

Armenia experienced serious fuel shortages following the August 16 explosion on a rail bridge in central Georgia that disrupted rail traffic through the war-stricken nation. Large-scale supplies of fuel and other basic commodities to Armenia resumed through another Georgian rail bridge, prepared for temporary use, only eleven days later.

Mr. SHERMAN. Unfortunately, this legislative vehicle provides no aid to Armenia. I hope that is rectified with other legislative vehicles that we work with in the future.

This is \$1 billion to basically show our anti Russian attitudes. That is an expensive telegram, particularly at a time when the United States faces tough economic conditions.

Now, I might favor this resolution if we could fund it by transferring to Tbilisi \$1 billion worth of mortgage backed securities. Unfortunately, the State Department plans to fund this in cash, \$85 billion of which has already been deployed by the Fed to deal with the latest crisis. AIG is just one of the crises to come. We are probably talking about closer to \$1 trillion before this is all over.

So if you start with the arrogant proposition that we can wage a war against Islamic terrorism or extreme Islamic terrorism on the one hand and a war against Russia on the other, that we can afford to do both economically and politically and diplomatically, that it is worth \$1 billion to throw down the gauntlet to Moscow, then this resolution meets that objective.

I would think that we would want to focus on the world's other humanitarian needs and provide some humanitarian assistance to the people of Georgia, but not in a ratio where our aid to Georgia so exceeds our aid to say Haiti or so many other places that need our assistance.

I will yield back.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Would the gentleman yield for a moment?

Mr. SHERMAN. Yes, I will.

Mr. DELAHUNT. You referenced Haiti. I think it is very important in terms of proportionality to understand that the hurricanes and the tropical storms that wrecked havoc on Haiti were responsible for more deaths than the conflict in South Ossetia and in Georgia.

The devastation that occurred in Haiti is overwhelming, far exceeding that which occurred in Georgia as a result of this conflict, and yet here we are speaking of \$1 billion when we could only find \$20 million for Haiti, which is in our neighborhood and is considered the single most impoverished nation in this hemisphere. What message does that send?

I yield back.

Mr. SHERMAN. I yield back.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

The gentleman from Texas, Mr. Poe, seeks recognition.

Mr. POE. Move to strike the last word.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This case, this situation, is another example of American inconsistency in foreign policy.

We believe in self-determination for some folks, and we decide who those folks are, like Kosovo, but not in South Ossetia because the Russians believe in South Ossetia having self-determination so we take the other approach and say, and if I quote the New York Times correctly, "this was an illegal invasion." Be that as it may, we send the world mixed messages on self-determination. We have no consistent policy, and that is unfortunate.

It is also, it seems to me, unfortunate that our friends, whether they be of the democratic persuasion, democracy persuasion, or not, if they get themselves in a little scrape well, if they lose here comes

the U.S.A. to bail them out. Whether they were justified or not justified makes no difference. We just take the cost, and we will absorb it and make the American taxpayer pay for some little scrape where people die and property is destroyed.

In this particular case, I have read this bill. It is interesting how we are going to fund the infrastructure, especially in energy, for South Ossetia and Georgia specifically. Maybe some don't know this, but over the last weekend the Russians may have invaded Georgia, but Ike invaded Texas.

The devastation in the state of Texas, to put it into perspective, people without power. If you take the state of New York, the state size of New York, and superimpose it on southeast Texas that is the land area that is without power, not to mention the homes that were destroyed completely on the Gulf Coast. That devastation has hurt the American people.

We are not doing for those oil companies or refineries in that area that were damaged what we are doing in Georgia for their energy infrastructure. It seems to me if we are going to talk about charity and humanitarian aid, maybe it starts at home.

Last I heard, Texas still is a part of the union, and I think we ought to, as the gentleman from Massachusetts has said, maybe we ought to think about where we send humanitarian aid. If you read this bill, some of that is not humanitarian aid. It seems to me to be something else and some other motivation.

I would think that we need to think hard and fast about why we are doing what we are doing, especially when the facts are still out about who did what when, and not just assume that because Georgia is our guy we are going to support all of the things they do and clean up their mess when they decide to get involved in a conflict with the Russians. Don't get me wrong. I don't have any sympathy for the Russians. I still look at them and see a big bear with KGB written across the chest.

I am opposed to this bill. I think we ought to think about this. We ought to think about taking care of humanitarian aid to people that have actually humanitarian needs in this country first and then take care of people in countries like Haiti, who have devastation too by hurricanes. If anybody wonders the impact of a hurricane, the next one that comes to Texas I will invite you down and we will ride it out together.

I will yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I thank my friend for yielding, and I want him to know as a Yankee I would be happy to support legislation that is described as Stand Up For Texas. I think you are absolutely correct.

I am willing to stand up for the Georgian people, but I am not willing to stand up for a government that has a suspect record on human rights, that has limited political participation and in whom we are unsure as to their behavior in terms of precipitating this conflict.

There are all kinds of reports. We don't have the facts. And, by the way, how did we come across this \$1 billion? What is the disparity between \$1 billion and \$20 million for Haiti? How do we explain that to this world when our image is suffering?

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. POE. Reclaiming my time, I couldn't agree with you more. We send the wrong message not just to Haiti and Georgia, but to other people throughout the world when we are so quick, Uncle Sam quick, to get out the checkbook and send another billion dollars to someplace.

You know, when most Americans think of Georgia they think of Savannah.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. POE. I yield back the rest of my time. Thank you.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman from Florida? For what purpose do you seek recognition?

Mr. WEXLER. Move to strike the last word.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to speak in support of the resolution.

First, however, in response or in concert with Mr. Delahunt, Mr. Delahunt brings up I think, as did Mr. Poe, valid points in terms of the disparity of the American reaction with respect to Georgia and Haiti in particular, as well as what we do for our own here in America when there is catastrophe.

The response, though, I believe is that the reaction in Haiti has been remarkably minimal and needs to be dramatically more significant not just in terms of resources, but also in terms of the opportunities under the immigration laws to make certain that those Haitians who are here are not forced out in the next several weeks to be a part of an urgent economic situation.

The issue with respect to this resolution, however, I think is a humanitarian issue. It is an economic issue. That is what this bill, the resolution, addresses, but there is also a broader foreign policy principle, and that principle that is at stake is we have a fledgling democracy which is an ally of the United States that seeks to incorporate itself further and further into transatlantic institutions, seeks to develop further as a democracy, and the question is at a time of extraordinary humanitarian and economic need will the United States respond or not?

There are dramatic consequences whatever the decision is, and I believe the decision must be to assist Georgia to send strong messages to countries like Ukraine and others that as they develop democratically, as they seek to move toward transatlantic institutions, that the United States will engage in a very profound and significant way. The converse of that is if we are unwilling to engage in a time of significant need then we in effect are handing off the field to Russia to do as Russia wishes.

While there are no guarantees with Georgia and the criticisms of Georgian behavior, the government, may in fact be legitimate to a significant point, and, yes, the human rights record is not what most of us would wish it to be, but if we are going to help those people that wish to move further and further on the democracy trail then at different points in time while it may not be perfect or pretty, we must be able to point to the fact that the leader of the democratic world is willing to assist.

We are not doing this alone. The European Union I think yesterday or today announced a comparable assistance package, and that I think is very important. This isn't America acting alone unilaterally.

ally. We are working with our European colleagues in a significant way, which I think will provide those that promote democratic evolution in nations like Georgia the opportunity to continue to promote that evolution.

It is bigger than the President of Georgia. It is bigger than the political party in Georgia. It is precisely where the United States at times in the past I think has missed opportunities. We have missed them in Iraq. We have missed them in other parts.

With all due respect to the argument that Mr. Poe makes, which I think is quite compelling, I think we ought to have a broader argument. If we are going to talk about the \$1 billion in Georgia, why aren't we then talking about the \$10–12 billion we are spending every month in Iraq?

That is a fair point, what Mr. Poe says. When Americans are in need, as they desperately are in Texas, we should have a broader debate, but if we are going to have that debate then let us actually look at the tens of billions of dollars we are spending in both military, economic and humanitarian needs across the countries.

This resolution speaks to a specific need in Georgia, which I think addresses a fundamental foreign policy and legitimate goal of America, and that is to assist those democratic fledgling countries that want to move further and further toward their goal of full democracy and into European/Atlantic institutions.

We should encourage it, and that is why I support this resolution. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

The gentleman from Indiana seeks recognition. For what purpose?

Mr. PENCE. I move to strike the last word.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minute.

Mr. PENCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise in support of H.R. 6911 to authorize assistance to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of the people of Georgia and for other purposes.

I have rarely come to this committee and felt the axiom more true that politics makes for strange bedfellows. To see a debate where my friend Ron Paul and my friend Bill Delahunt are on one side of an argument and my good friend Rob Wexler and I are on the other—I am tempted to move for a recess and regroup because I am confused.

But let me say with great respect to my colleagues on the right and on the left who are opposing this bill for the reason of its cost, I think my bonafides on fiscal discipline are probably well established among my peers, and I share a concern about \$1 billion, but I want to associate myself with Mr. Wexler's very eloquent comments and say in addition to thinking about the cost of passing this bill out, I think we ought to consider the cost of not passing it.

There is an old adage that the Russian bear never dies. It only hibernates. I would add when a bear awakens from hibernation, it is usually hungry. I don't know if the Russian bear is waking up and I don't know if what happened in South Ossetia and Abkhazia represent a renewed effort of that old Russian character, its rapacious appetite for territory and hegemony is alive again, but I am not interested in running the risk by heading to Munich and walking away and not responding.

We learned that lesson in the last century when another rapacious regime justified in Czechoslovakia for the same reasons. It seems to me this has not been talked about enough. When Germany moved into Czechoslovakia, it was almost word-for-word justified by the same rhetoric that Russia used in Georgia: To protect its own citizens from abuse in that country.

The world community goes to Munich and cuts and deals and basically did nothing. I commend—

Mr. PAUL. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. PENCE. Who is asking?

Mr. PAUL. Over here.

Mr. PENCE. Let me finish my thought, Ron, and I will see if I have time left.

I really do believe that the cost of not passing this bill is geometrically larger in potential than the cost of passing it. I think it is absolutely imperative that the United States of America join the European Union and say to the extent that we are able to say at this time, which is mostly through resources and reconstruction and rhetorical condemnation, that this will not stand.

To level the resources of the European Union and the United States of America at this fledgling democracy of Georgia to help them get back on their feet after this barbarous attack by the Russian Federation I think is a moral and historical imperative.

And so I think we should count the costs always when we are talking about the taxpayers' money—we are reprogramming \$.5 billion this year and \$.5 billion next—but I also think we ought to factor in the cost of doing nothing and what message would it send to Moscow if this committee and this Congress walked away from an opportunity to stand with the people of Georgia to help them rebuild and to condemn that to which they have been subjected one more time.

So I urge support of this resolution, and I would yield to the gentleman in the time I have remaining.

Chairman BERMAN. Which is 12 seconds.

Mr. PAUL. I ask unanimous consent the gentleman have 1 minute to answer a question.

Chairman BERMAN. Without objection, the gentleman's time is extended by 1 minute.

Mr. PAUL. Thank you. I would like to ask if you might not be making my point because when you cite Munich and the reason to be there is to confront in a military sense the Russians and that is the danger, that sort of contradicts the whole purpose of the bill.

The purpose of the bill is humanitarian aid. They are not admitting this is a military confrontation standing up to the Russians, so in many ways you have made the point of my concerns that the unintended consequence here will be the reigniting of the Cold War. Is that not so?

Mr. PENCE. Reclaiming my time, it would not be us reigniting it.

This resolution does more than just provide resources. It reiterates our strong support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. It calls on the Russian Federation to fully withdraw all troops to preconflict, condemns the Russian Federation's recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

And so it goes beyond and only rhetorically so, but this resolution is the United States' opportunity to stand financially and rhetorically with the people of Georgia, and I respectfully suggest that it is imperative historically and morally that we pass it.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

The gentleman from Georgia seeks recognition.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman from Georgia, our Georgia. We are all Georgians.

Mr. SCOTT. Absolutely. We are definitely all Georgians.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I certainly want to weigh in on this.

I think that this truly presents an opportunity for America, for the United States of America, to truly be what it stands for—the legacy, the richness, the heritage of being Americans. We are the United States of America.

Here is a country—our friend, our ally—that is largely in the shape it is in as a result of putting forward an effort and principles and a way of life called democracy in a region in which we have encouraged, we have facilitated, we have worked with.

This is a response to a very heavy-handed, out of proportion response from Russia. Russia wasn't just responding to this excursion into what arguably we can say may be a disputed area. Russia wanted to send an overwhelming message not just to Georgia, but to the United States of America especially, and I believe we have a moral responsibility to respond to a humanitarian need for the people of Georgia; not the government.

Let us make clear that this is a humanitarian effort. Here is what we are doing. We are sending medical supplies. We are sending money to help rebuild an infrastructure that again was completely devastated overwhelmingly, over handedly, a response that was totally out of proportion for Russia to do in the very first place.

And let us be big about this, Mr. Chairman. This is indeed a major play, and we can talk about the Cold War. My own opinion is the Cold War never really got cold and frozen over. It has gone through thaws. It has gone through ebbs and flows, but it is there.

Make no mistake about it. This thing has been going on for a long time ever since the conclusion of World War II. And when I mention that, what did we do in World War II. This isn't the first time. We almost with our allies basically devastated Central Europe, but through the Marshall Plan we immediately responded because we knew that we are Americans.

We stand for something. We stand for what is right and what is just in the world. This is right and this is just. Not only that, Mr. Chairman, but this is a golden opportunity that is coming at an important time for the United States to let its light shine and really show the world what we stand for.

I daresay, if we back away from the table from this and we don't pass this bill we will be providing a great deal of ammunition that can literally be used against us as we move forward to try to deal with what is perhaps now our greatest challenge, and that is restructuring ourselves as a leader of the world with the kind of positive image that we can be proud of.

This is strategically important too, Mr. Chairman, as we look to the future and we look to Georgia's geographical location. It is important as we move forward, as we begin to deal with some very pressing issues of energy, of terrorism, of all of the major issues confronting us.

We dare not back away from this great opportunity we have to truly be the light of the world that we are so proud to have in our heritage and our history. Let us move forward with this bill in a meaningful way.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

The gentleman from American Samoa?

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I have no comments to make at this time.

Chairman BERMAN. Does the gentleman have a motion?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Chairman, I was seeking recognition.

Chairman BERMAN. I am sorry. You had spoken on the earlier amendment. You had not spoken since we adopted that amendment?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Correct.

Chairman BERMAN. I withdraw my recognition of the gentleman from Samoa, and I ask the gentleman from California for what purpose—

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I move to strike the last word.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. This debate does seem a bit bizarre, and the context of having our economy teetering on the edge of bankruptcy and we are talking about spending hundreds of millions of dollars in a faraway region that has nothing to do with our own national security.

The United States Government right now is so overextended throughout the world, but also overextended financially. The level of deficit spending for our government next year will be about \$500 billion. Couple that with the fact that we seem to be jumping into faraway conflicts that have nothing to do with our security.

In this case, we are proposing spending hundreds of millions of dollars, which means we will borrow it from China probably, in order to give it to Georgia to make up for its fight with Russia, which it started, I might add, and then Russia will be driven into the arms of China. This makes no sense at all.

In budget terms, we are proposing to give hundreds of millions of dollars to give to a government that clearly ignored our advice, broke a truce and then initiated a military action against people whose only crime was that they didn't want to be part of Georgia.

Is it our policy in the United States that we will support any effort by any government in order to use violence in order to maintain its current borders? Many of the current borders around the world were established by Colonialists 150 years ago.

In this case, Joseph Stalin was the one who threw these two breakaway republics or areas into Georgia. Are we then dedicated to supporting whatever Joe Stalin did back in those days, and we are willing to back them up to use force to insist that what Joe Stalin decided to do will be from now on for the rest of eternity?

As far as budgeting this proposal, it is not a magnanimous proposal and we are just being so generous. Where is the money coming from even from our own budget? We are talking about taking this out of OPIC, which is designed to help people in developing countries. The new Millennium Challenge Account I understand will also be hit. General foreign aid will be hit.

We are doing as we are, eliminating money from pure benevolence on the part of ourselves and the Millennium Account and foreign aid and giving it to Georgians for political reasons. The political reasons are they used force. They broke a truce in order to teach the Russians a lesson.

But the Russians didn't learn the lesson and they didn't just take this slap in the face and so we now are going to provide hundreds of millions of dollars at the expense of these other people who need it in order to bolster the Georgians' understanding that well, we really did back them when they attached these two breakaway republics.

It seems to me that what we are doing is we have a policy of hostility to Russia and a total double standard to the entire world. How do we expect Russia to cooperate with us? Is Russian cooperation more important than Georgian cooperation? It certainly is. We need the Russians in dealing with radical Islam, we need them on proliferation issues, and we need them in dealing with a really potential adversary in Communist China that still threatens our national interest.

Instead, we are driving them away in order to make sure that some small power group in Georgia is able to maintain its control over two groups of people that don't want to be part of Georgia, don't even speak the Georgian language, that were forced into Georgia by Joseph Stalin. No matter how many sinister words are used and phrases are used to try to talk about Russian aggression, it will not change the fact that the Georgians initiated this. The Georgians were the ones who attacked first. It is clear.

We have the Georgian Defense Minister, former Defense Minister, reconfirming that it wasn't just from provocation. I mis-said that word again last time as well, provocation. It wasn't just something that was provocative on the part of the Russians. They didn't just fool the Georgians, the stupid Georgians, into attack. This is something the Georgians had planned for a long time.

And so how do we reward them for basically not following our advice and committing an act of aggression? We give them hundreds of millions of dollars to build up their country at the expense of other countries in the world that we are trying to help out who are in much worse situations and didn't commit aggression against their neighbor. This is ridiculous, and I will be voting against it.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

The gentleman from Washington?

Mr. SMITH OF WASHINGTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I seek time actually just to yield some time to the chairman.

Chairman BERMAN. I appreciate that very much. I just want to take a minute before we go to a vote on this to try and bring this down from a little bit of the hyperbole.

This is a very modest bill. Its actual authorization is about already appropriated monies, but monies that have not yet been obli-

gated, in order to deal with some very specific humanitarian, reconstruction and institution building purposes in Georgia.

As I said in the opening statement at the hearing we had last week, I believe the leadership of Georgia committed a terrible blunder in their decision to move to Tskhinvali. I certainly do not want to assume the worst from the Russian actions in the context of all future relationships because the conclusion from that is that on issues where it is very essential that we build and nurture a partnership with Russia most particularly on the issue of Iran, all of that will have been lost.

This is not a bill that provides military assistance. It is not a bill that takes money away from hurricane relief or disaster relief in Haiti. If this bill goes down, none of those other compelling and worthy causes are helped. This is a modest effort to help the people of a country that has been an ally, that with all its flaws and blemishes and the mistakes of its leadership has suffered a great deal.

It is not the only worthy cause in the world, and if we are waiting for the bill that deals with that we are going to wait quite a while longer. I would just ask the members of the committee to support what I think—

By the way, it is not a bill that seeks sanctions against Russia, and it is not a bill that even deals with issues like future NATO membership. One thing I do know is the Russian reaction was disproportionate and great damage was inflicted, and partnering with the European Union I think it is appropriate that we take some of those unobligated, although already appropriated, funds and redirect them to this cause.

I yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. SMITH OF WASHINGTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Chairman BERMAN. Has the gentleman spoken on this, or did he speak on the earlier amendment?

Mr. DELAHUNT. I spoke on the earlier amendment.

Chairman BERMAN. Okay. Then the gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I thank the chair. I do have great respect for the chair, but as to his description of this proposal as being modest, I must disagree.

One reviews the whereas clauses, and the gentleman, my dear friend from Indiana, talked about rhetorical support. I don't know what happened, and that is, I would suggest, an American virtue. It is called due process. It is called finding the facts out before you buy a pig in a poke or you fly blind.

There is no lipstick involved, I can assure you. It is just a poke. But one might call this bill—well, I won't go down that road.

But in any event, let me just reference some of the comments that have been made about responsibility. We do have a responsibility to ascertain what happened and what the facts are.

It is clear that our European allies are much more open now than they were in the immediate aftermath to start to begin a thoughtful examination of what the facts are, and we should react similarly because I think it is a disaster if we quickly pass a bill in terms of this order of magnitude that will be interpreted as re-

warding possible reckless behavior. That is a terrible message to send.

My good friend from Florida, Mr. Wexler, talks about transatlantic institutions. I infer that he is referring to NATO. Well, from my perspective this is an example of a course that could be extremely dangerous. Let us reflect a moment. Imagine if Georgia were in NATO and came to the NATO Council and sought American military intervention and there was a vote. What would we do?

Well, I think that in a column by Pat Buchanan—talk about strange bedfellows—he made this statement with which I agree: “If the Russia-Georgia war proves nothing else, it is the insanity of giving erratic hotheads in volatile nations the power to drag the United States into war.”

This is not about Czechoslovakia. This is not about 1938 or Munich. This is about what is doing in the best interests of the United States, and it is clear that within Georgia there are diverse emerging groups that are in opposition to this small clique that has I believe conned us and has developed well-connected relationships here in Washington that make it a PR battle with the ultimate prize being \$1-billion check and NATO membership.

This should come to us as a warning. Go slow. Think about this. Where did the \$1-billion figure come from? Where are the specifics? Has there been a submission to this committee in terms of how that \$1 billion is going to be used? For what? Cement? Wood? Nails? What is it going to be used for?

I oppose this bill. I think it could lead us down a very, very dangerous road.

Let me end with a final quote from an article today in the Washington Times written by Dmitri Simes, who has this to say:

“Alaska Governor Sarah Palin may be forgiven for claiming in her interview that Russia’s invasion of Georgia was unprovoked. What is less explicable is that the perception that Russia attacked Georgia first remains common in the U.S. political mainstream, even as abundant evidence demonstrates otherwise.”

Mr. Simes is the executive director of the founding——

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman——

Mr. DELAHUNT. With that I yield back.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

The gentleman from American Samoa?

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Chairman, I move that the chairman be authorized to seek consideration of H.R. 6911, including the amendments adopted by the committee, under suspension of the rules.

Chairman BERMAN. The question occurs on the gentleman’s motion. All in favor say aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman BERMAN. All opposed say no.

[Chorus of noes.]

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman BERMAN. In the opinion of the chair the ayes have it.

The gentleman from Texas?

Mr. PAUL. If this is the final vote, I would like a recorded vote.

Chairman BERMAN. I sure hope it is the final vote.

Mr. PAUL. Okay.

Chairman BERMAN. And it will now be recorded.

Mr. PAUL. Thank you.

Chairman BERMAN. The clerk will call the roll.

Ms. RUSH. Chairman Berman?

Chairman BERMAN. Aye.

Ms. RUSH. Chairman Berman votes yes.

Mr. Ackerman?

[No response.]

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Faleomavaega?

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Aye.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Faleomavaega votes yes.

Mr. Payne?

Mr. PAYNE. Pass.

Ms. RUSH. I am sorry. I didn't hear that. Pass?

Mr. Sherman?

Mr. SHERMAN. No.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Sherman votes no.

Mr. Wexler?

Mr. WEXLER. Yes.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Wexler votes yes.

Mr. Engel?

Mr. ENGEL. Yes.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Engel votes yes.

Mr. Delahunt

Mr. DELAHUNT. No.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Delahunt votes no.

Mr. Meeks?

[No response.]

Ms. RUSH. Ms. Watson?

[No response.]

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Smith of Washington?

Mr. SMITH OF WASHINGTON. No.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Smith of Washington votes no.

Mr. Carnahan?

Mr. CARNAHAN. Yes.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Carnahan votes yes.

Mr. Tanner?

[No response.]

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Green?

[No response.]

Ms. RUSH. Ms. Woolsey?

Ms. WOOLSEY. Yes.

Ms. RUSH. Ms. Woolsey votes yes.

Ms. Jackson Lee?

[No response.]

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Hinojosa?

[No response.]

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Crowley?

Mr. CROWLEY. Yes.

Ms. RUSH. Mr. Crowley votes yes.

Mr. Wu?
 Mr. WU. Yes.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Wu votes yes.
 Mr. Miller?
 Mr. MILLER. Yes.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Miller votes yes.
 Ms. Sánchez?
 [No response.]
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Scott?
 Mr. SCOTT. Yes.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Scott votes yes.
 Mr. Costa?
 Mr. COSTA. Yes.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Costa votes yes.
 Mr. Sires?
 Mr. SIRES. Yes.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Sires votes yes.
 Ms. Giffords?
 Ms. GIFFORDS. Yes.
 Ms. RUSH. Ms. Giffords votes yes.
 Mr. Klein?
 Mr. KLEIN. Yes.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Klein votes yes.
 Ms. Lee?
 [No response.]
 Ms. RUSH. Ms. Ros-Lehtinen?
 Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Yes.
 Ms. RUSH. Ms. Ros-Lehtinen votes yes.
 Mr. Smith of New Jersey?
 Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Yes.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Smith of New Jersey votes yes.
 Mr. Burton?
 [No response.]
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Gallegly?
 Mr. GALLEGLY. No.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Gallegly votes no.
 Mr. Rohrabacher?
 Mr. ROHRABACHER. No.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Rohrabacher votes no.
 Mr. Manzullo?
 [No response.]
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Royce?
 Mr. ROYCE. No.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Royce votes no.
 Mr. Chabot?
 [No response.]
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Tancredo?
 [No response.]
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Paul?
 Mr. PAUL. No.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Paul votes no.
 Mr. Flake?
 Mr. FLAKE. No.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Flake votes no.

Mr. Pence?
 Mr. PENCE. Yes.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Pence votes yes.
 Mr. Wilson?
 Mr. WILSON. Yes.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Wilson votes yes.
 Mr. Boozman?
 [No response.]
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Barrett?
 Mr. BARRETT. Yes.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Barrett votes yes.
 Mr. Mack?
 [No response.]
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Fortenberry?
 [No response.]
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. McCaul?
 [No response.]
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Poe?
 [No response.]
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Inglis?
 Mr. INGLIS. Aye.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Inglis votes yes.
 Mr. Fortuño?
 [No response.]
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Bilirakis?
 Mr. BILIRAKIS. Yes.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Bilirakis votes yes.
 Mr. Payne?
 Mr. PAYNE. For the chair, I reluctantly vote yes. I really think
 it is wrong, Mr. Chairman, but I will vote yes.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Payne votes yes.
 Mr. Meeks?
 Mr. MEEKS. No.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Meeks votes no.
 Mr. CHABOT. Aye.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Chabot votes yes.
 Chairman BERMAN. Is there anyone else who seeks to vote?
 [No response.]
 Chairman BERMAN. If not, the clerk will tally the vote and report
 it.
 Keep that tally in mind, but let us hear from Mr. Ackerman.
 Mr. ACKERMAN. Aye.
 Ms. RUSH. Mr. Ackerman votes yes.
 Chairman BERMAN. The clerk will report.
 Ms. RUSH. On this vote there are 24 ayes and nine noes.
 Chairman BERMAN. The motion is agreed to, and the clerk is au-
 thorized to make technical and conforming corrections.
 There being no further business, the committee is adjourned.
 Thank you very much for your participation.
 [Whereupon, at 12:11 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]